Appendix D. Laurel and MSG

This section addresses the relationship between MSG and Laurel. MSG users *must* thoroughly understand the contents of this section *before trying to use Laurel for the first time.* If you don't use Maxc or you have never used MSG, you may skip this section entirely.

Message.txt

If you are an MSG user on Maxc and become a Laurel user, then your Message.txt file on Maxc will become your Laurel in-box. Getting new mail (with Laurel) will move messages from Maxc to your Alto disk, *emptying Message.txt*. This makes it very inconvenient to continue to use both Laurel and MSG, for once you have mail files on your Alto disk, MSG can no longer access them. Furthermore, MSG and Laurel maintain mail files in formats that are incompatible. You can continue to use MSG to maintain mail files on Maxc, and you can use Laurel to maintain mail files on your Alto, *but you cannot move mail files back and forth.* If you want to convert completely to Laurel, you can move MSG-constructed mail files to your Alto for use by Laurel, as explained below. *However, this is a one-way street; once on your Alto the files cannot conveniently be moved back to Maxc and processed by MSG.*

Mail file philosophy

Laurel encourages you to use your default mail file (Active.mail) as a *temporary* storage area, not an archive. Accordingly, deleted messages are expunged whenever you leave Laurel or shift your attention to another mail file. There is no analogue of MSG's Quit command (which preserves deleted messages); Laurel's **Quit** is like MSG's Exit.   If you wish to classify messages, use mark characters (section 2.3.2). Eventually, selective display on the basis of mark characters may be possible. Use separate mail files to obtain an archive facility. Laurel's performance will be better and your screen will be less cluttered.

Overwrite

Laurel doesn't have a command corresponding to MSG's Overwrite. However, the same effect can be obtained by selecting **Mail file** with BLUE.

Processing your mail away from an Alto

You can use MSG from any reasonable terminal dialed to Maxc or connected to the Arpanet, but you can't use Laurel without an Alto. Consequently, if you have no Alto available and would like to process your mail, you must use MSG. *If you observe a few conventions while using MSG,* you will not need to reprocess your old messages with Laurel. Thus, you can use MSG from a home terminal or when you are out-of-town, and revert to Laurel when your Alto is again at hand.

As long as you manipulate *only* your Message.txt file with Msg, Laurel will note what you have done when you perform a **New mail** command. (Remember, Laurel uses Message.txt as your in-box.) Specifically, deleted messages in Message.txt will not be retrieved, and the examined/unexamined status of each message retrieved will be reflected in the mark field in Laurel's table-of-contents.

Moving mail files from Maxc

Because Msg and Laurel have incompatible mail file formats, you cannot simply move your archival mail files to your Alto disk and expect Laurel to read them. The following procedure should be followed:

1.   Start Laurel, and use the **Run** command to run Chat.laurel.

2.   Using Chat, login to Maxc.

3.   Using Chat, append the desired mail file, say *Name*.txt, to Message.txt:
         @Append *Name*.txt Message.txt CR
     If Message.txt is empty, you must undelete it first, by giving the command:
         @Undelete Message.txt CR

4.   Point the cursor at **Mail file**, click RED, and supply the file name *Name*.

5.   Point the cursor at **New mail** and click RED. After the messages have arrived, ensure that no unexpected ones have been included at the beginning and/or end of the file. (New mail might have arrived on Maxc before or after step 3.) Move any extraneous messages to "Active.mail".

6.   Repeat steps 3 through 5 for each mail file on Maxc.

7.   Logout from Maxc and Quit from Chat.laurel. You may now proceed in Laurel.

Fortunately, once you have moved all of your files in this way, you won't have to do it again, since Laurel will maintain them in its own format on your Alto disk.